

Walking: a godly exercise.

My wife and I try to go for a walk first thing in the morning. Some people go on a walkathon, a sponsored event in which participants walk a certain distance for charity. Many Christian schools host a walkathon each year to raise funds for one cause or another. Walking is great exercise. Yet in our rushed age many don't go for a walk so readily. They may take their car to go to the corner store. Even during the holidays, most people seek their creation in other activities besides walking. Yet walking offers possibilities to see things you easily miss when you drive a car. You can take time to smell the roses in someone's garden, see a squirrel rushing up a tree, or a robin pulling a worm out of the ground. A majestic oak tree towers above you, while on the ground friendly looking pansies seem to smile at you. It is as if they are saying, " See we are all here. Great that you take the time to check us out." That is walking.

Walking is not necessarily about a specific destination. You make your rounds and return to the place where you started. When I think about walking, I am reminded how often the Bible mentions the verb "to walk" in connection with Christian living. To walk with God is to lead a life of faith in covenant obedience to God. It is in all our ways, actions, and duties, to have a continual love for God, having faith in Him, depending on Him, and submitting to Him. It gives life meaning and purpose.

The Christian walk has a destination. The believer is always on the way, on a journey. God's people Israel left Egypt's house of bondage, crossed the Red Sea, travelled through the harsh wilderness on the way to the promised land. The believer's life is a pilgrimage, "a longing for a better country - a heavenly one" (Hebr. 11:16). But the Bible also speaks of our walk here on earth. With this figure of speech, the Bible means that life here on earth is given to us by God. He is our companion in order to strengthen and guide us in our journey of life. We don't have to anxiously anticipate what is to come. We may enjoy each day as a gift from the Lord. We may cherish life and play, never forgetting that we always walk before the Lord. We are accountable to Him. In the deepest sense it is our relationship to the Him that counts. That's why our life is both a walk and a pilgrimage.

We are responsible for the choices we make along the way, walking on the road the Lord has shown us, in a straight path (Gal. 2:14), leaving a straight path for others to follow. A walk that is not with the Lord, is a walk against the Lord. It is to walk in the ways of sinners (Ps.1:1), in the way of Balaam (2 Pet. 2:15).

It is remarkable that the Bible often uses the word "walk" with a preposition. This is already the case in the Old Testament. Enoch walked with God (Gen. 5: 22; Hebr.11:5). He must have been at peace with God for two cannot walk together unless they agree (Amos 3:3). He enjoyed close communion with God. His life was one of steady progress. As he walked with God, he took each step with eyes fixed on his heavenly Companion. The Old Testament also speaks of walking in the way of the Lord (2 King 21:22; Deut.10: 12). This refers to the instruction which God has given and particularly to the commandments of the law. Similarly there are expressions such as to walk in truth (Isa. 38:3), in honesty (Ps. 15: 2), in righteousness (Isa. 33: 15), in peace (Mal. 2:6), in integrity (Ps. 26: 1). Abraham

walked before the Lord (Gen. 17:1). The psalmist prayed that he "may walk before the Lord in the land of the living"(Ps. 116 : 9).

The New Testament refers to a leader who goes before his people. The good shepherd leads his sheep, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. The Christian walks in the newness of life (Rom. 6: 4), after the spirit (8:4), in honesty (13:13). And negatively, not after the flesh (Rom. 8:4), not disorderly (2 Thess. 3:6). The Christian walks in love (Eph. 5:2), in the light (1Jn. 1:7). He is known by his walk. The ungodly man walks in darkness. He does not know where he is going (Jn.12: 35). In Col.2: 6, Paul speaks of walking in Him (Christ Jesus), a walk well pleasing unto the Lord, for His pleasure.

The apostle says that we are to walk with God in holy obedience (2 Pet. 3: 11,14). In other words: Live as Christians! Our life has value as we follow the One we cannot yet see, the Good Shepherd, our Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul would say, "we live by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7).

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June, 2004